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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0162
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS

UNCLAS ATHENS 000747

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OREP](#) [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [AFIN](#) [GM](#) [GR](#)

SUBJECT: EMBASSY ATHENS WELCOMES STAFFDEL JOHNSON (MAY 17-22)

¶1. Embassy Athens welcomes STAFFDEL Johnson to Athens, Greece, from May 17-22 for the 17th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum.

¶2. The Administrative Point of Contact (Control Officer) for STAFFDEL Johnson is:

David Muehlke, Political Officer
Office: (30) 210-720-2551
Mobile: (30) 695-721-0688
Fax: (30) 210-729-4307
Email: muehlkedv@state.gov

¶3. The Embassy has confirmed the following hotel reservations for Mr. Alex Johnson:

Sunday, May 17 to Wednesday, May 20 (3 nights)
Lagonisi Grand Resort Hotel
RATE: 175 euro (\$237) per night. Tax, service, and breakfast buffet included.
ADDRESS: 40th Km. Athens-Sounio Avenue, 19010, Lagonissi
TEL: (30) 229-107-6000
FAX: (30) 229-102-4534
WEBSITE: www.grandresort.gr
NOTES: This room rate is the OSCE conference rate and is above per diem. Embassy will disburse lodging per diem to traveler at actual cost.

Wednesday, May 20 to Friday, May 22 (2 nights)
Divani Acropolis Hotel
RATE: 150 euro (\$204) per night. Tax, service, and breakfast buffet included.
ADDRESS: 19-25, Parthenonos Street, 11742 Makrygianni
TEL: (30) 210-928-0100
FAX: (30) 210-921-4993
WEBSITE: www.divanis.com/acropolis
NOTES: This room rate is above per diem. Embassy will disburse lodging per diem to traveler at actual cost.

¶4. VISA REQUIREMENTS: Diplomatic and official passport holders must/must have a Greek diplomatic visa, a valid Schengen visa, or a current diplomatic ID from any other Schengen country, in addition to their passport, in order to enter Greece. The Embassy will be unable to obtain planeside visas for USG employees arriving in Greece without proper documentation. Holders of tourist passports do not require visas for a stay of up to 90 days.

THREAT ASSESSMENT

¶5. Security

Embassy Athens has a high designation for indigenous terrorism and political violence. In the past, local Greek terrorist groups have targeted prominent Greeks as well as non-Greek Officials, including Americans. We believe that the threat to official US Government

personnel on short-term assignments to Greece or visiting for tourism is low. The indigenous groups historically have engaged in extensive operational surveillance over long periods of time prior to an attack.

In 2003 and again in 2004, the Greek Government made significant progress to combat domestic terrorism by successfully convicting the leader and key hit men of the November 17 terrorist organization and of the ELA. 17N was responsible for assassinating prominent Greeks and five members of the US Mission over the course of its 30-year history. Convicted ELA members were responsible for several bombings, attempted murders and were involved in at least one assassination. While these convictions likely impacted on the operational capabilities of 17N and ELA, it is too soon to assess whether the threat from 17N and ELA was completely eliminated. New domestic terror groups with similar ideologies to 17N have launched attacks against both local government agencies including police stations and businesses. The domestic terrorist group Revolutionary Struggle (RS) launched a Rocket Propelled Grenade at the US Embassy on January 7, 2007. Greek Police have not made any arrests. We urge vigilance and caution, as the worldwide threat from other terrorist groups against Americans in general remains high. Official Americans should assume they are potential targets.

The U.S. Government remains deeply concerned about the heightened threat of terrorist attacks against U.S.

citizens and interests abroad. There are anarchist groups that engage in violent acts in Greece. Although these activities in recent years have been primarily against economic and Greek government targets, they continue to pose a danger to Greeks and foreign visitors. American businesses have been attacked by anarchists using gas canister bombs and Molotov cocktails.

Over the past year, the U.S. Embassy has experienced bomb threats, protest marches, and anti-U.S. demonstrations. These protests are generally peaceful though a few provoked random acts of violence. Travelers to Greece are advised that protests or demonstrations could occur at any time; unwitting observers or bystanders might be identified, to their disadvantage, as Americans. RSO recommends that official U.S. travelers in Greece remain alert when moving about in public places and avoid certain places where demonstrators frequently congregate. These places include the Polytechnic University area, located on 28 October (Patission) Street between the National Archeological Museum and Omonia and Exarchia Squares, located near Kolonaki; Omonia and Syntagma Squares, which are often used as launch sites for large demonstrations; and Mavili Square, located near the U.S. Embassy. Visitors should keep abreast of news about large demonstrations and avoid these areas and metro stops.

Crime

Crime is rated medium in Greece. For TDY visitors, pick pocketing and purse snatching are the most common crimes. Taxis are generally safe though metered cabs are recommended. Taxis too will often pick up more than one passenger unless prior arrangements are made. Crimes of opportunity thefts, break-ins, and occasional scams are on the rise. Travelers should be especially cautious with wallets, purses, and parcels when traveling on crowded streets, public buses, trolleys, and the subway. There have been several instances of motorcyclists approaching cars stuck in traffic, reaching through open windows or smashing closed ones, and stealing whatever is within reach. Security recommends keeping purses, parcels, handbags, etc. out of sight under the seat or on the floor of the car. Windows should be kept closed and doors locked. Pedestrians may also be confronted by beggars and other street people who may attempt to divert

attention, then steal unprotected valuables either by pick pocketing or snatch-and-grab techniques. Women are generally safe from violent crime in Greece. Men are aggressive by American standards however when approaching women.

Traffic in Greek urban areas, especially Athens and Thessaloniki, is undisciplined and dangerous. Greece has a poor record within the European Union for traffic fatalities, mainly due to excessive speeding. Road rage is always a concern. Accidents can result in fistfights. Drivers in Greece should exercise caution and common sense. Drivers and pedestrians alike should exercise extreme caution when operating motor vehicles or when walking along roadways. Moreover, tourists who rent motorbikes either on the Greek mainland or its islands must wear helmets and must take special precautions on the local roads that are typically poorly maintained.

SPECKHARD